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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1091  
INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
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RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0345  
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0358  
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0257  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0196  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0186  
RUEH NJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0546  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0530  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0178  
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0519  
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1380  
RHMFISS/AFRICOM  
RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0242

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGUI 000257

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [CT](#)  
SUBJECT: ZIGUELE CLAIMS THAT CARG IS UNDERMINING ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION

REF: A. BANGUI 0256  
[1](#)B. BANGUI 0209

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[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On November 25, Ambassador and DCM met with Martin Ziguele, leading opposition figure in the Central African Republic, to discuss the return of former president Ange-Felix Patasse and the upcoming elections. Ziguele, formerly Patasse's Prime Minister and current rival in the elections, repeated the widely held belief that Patasse is in league with current CAR President Francois Bozize to divide the opposition and sway the electoral results in Bozize's favor. He believes that the Central African Government (CARG) is manipulating voter registries against electoral law and requested the assistance of the international community in assuring transparent elections, including the participation of refugees and internally displaced persons. Not trusting the Central African armed forces, Ziguele would like the CEEAC-sponsored peacekeeping force (MICOPAX) to facilitate voter registration and "guarantee" the results of the elections. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Since our last meeting with Ziguele, last month (ref B), his main concern regarding the upcoming 2010 elections in the CAR has shifted from a lack of access to party members in the field - he stated this time that he has made several "party building" trips to various prefectures and did not mention harassment by the police or army - to worries over CARG manipulation of the voter lists. The current electoral law stipulates that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) must carry out voter registration, but Ziguele claims that the CARG is creating lists using local officials from the KNK (Bozize's party) without coordination with the IEC. Ziguele fears that many refugees and IDPs, most of whom are not sympathetic to the

current regime, will not be registered and will not have the right to vote.

13. (SBU) Ziguele believes that if the elections are reasonably transparent, he will have a chance to win. He claims that much of the electorate remembers Bozize's unfulfilled campaign promises from 2005 to build roads, hospitals, schools, and to pay civil service salaries on time - not to mention the numerous budget irregularities surrounding loans from international institutions and the inability of the Central African army (FACA) to defend the country from the Lord's Resistance Army. Ziguele asserted that he is not overly tainted by his former role as Prime Minister in Patasse's unpopular government and has assembled a group of honest people who were also "deceived" by Patasse. Regarding speculation that Bozize allowed Patasse to return to the CAR in hopes that he would divide the MLPC, the party founded by Patasse and currently run by Ziguele, Ziguele pointed out that none of the dozens of national-level MLPC officials have defected to Patasse, and Patasse has been forced to declare himself an independent candidate.

14. (SBU) Ziguele asked the Ambassador that the international community help ensure transparent elections. He fears that, without outside pressure, the CARG will continue to undermine the IEC and the electoral code. Ziguele also does not trust the FACA and would like MICOPAX to facilitate the IEC and guarantee the results of the election. (Note: MICOPAX has approximately 500 troops from participating CEEAC countries present in Bangui and northwestern CAR. Facilitating the IEC is not part of its mandate. End Note.)

15. (SBU) COMMENT: With no polls or any other public opinion sampling in the CAR, it is difficult to determine the support of the candidates among the population especially since most Central Africans are more focused on finding their next meal than elections six months away. Ziguele is certainly more

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charismatic than Bozize, but people in the capital and southern part of the country do not appear too unhappy with Bozize as evidenced by the lack of any large protests or demonstrations; and as Ziguele noted, Bozize has the apparatus of the state on his side. Thus, our analysis of Ziguele's chances has not changed since what we reported in ref B - though he is still the strongest opponent of Bozize despite Patasse's return, his belief that he could be the next president of the CAR is likely wishful thinking. END COMMENT.  
COOK